

Between Grounds

Between Grounds proposes a transformative urban vision for Hyllie, Malmö—where spatial, ecological, and social systems intersect to support a regenerative and inclusive future.

Rooted in Malmö's ambition for climate-responsible and socially cohesive growth, this three-phase development strategy repositions infrastructure, landscape, and community life as interconnected grounds for sustainable urban transformation. Through interventions at the neighbourhood, city, and regional scales, the project seeks to “re-source” Hyllie—materially, socially, and ecologically. It begins by healing and connecting fragmented urban fabric, evolves into reimagining infrastructure as civic platforms, and culminates in positioning Hyllie as a storefront for regional innovation and cultural hybridity. Each phase blends technical feasibility with long-term environmental and social value. By bridging the symbolic and the practical—between natural and built environments, between marginalised and centralised communities, between local identity and global relevance—Between Grounds envisions Hyllie as a dynamic model for Malmö's sustainable future.

Re-sourcing from Diversities: Public Space and Integration

Mapping Hyllie reveals the fragmented nature of its urban landscape and helps identify existing assets that can serve as the foundation for inclusive development.

There is a patchwork of housing areas from different periods and typologies: the green villas of Kulladal, the apartment blocks of Lindeborg, the long houses in Holma, and the dense, modern fabric of Hyllie Allé. These areas are separated by decades of development, gaps in infrastructure and social diversities.

Along Hyllie Boulevard, the scale shifts from neighborhood to region, hosting Malmö Mässan, Malmö Arena, and Hyllie Station surrounded by office towers. To the north, new public destinations like Hylliebadet and Hyllie Sports Center offer civic amenities. However, the district largely functions as a commuter hub, lacking a cohesive urban fabric that supports everyday life.

There is not only the need for infrastructural connectivity in Hyllie, but more importantly, the necessity of programmatic and motivational interventions that reflect and respond to local interests. It identifies three key areas with strong potential for spatial and social integration. To the northeast of Vattenparksgatan, a currently underdeveloped zone presents an opportunity for residential growth and the creation of community-oriented spaces. North of Malmö Mässan, the area could serve as a link between the green park systems of Malmö and offer new employment prospects. East of Hyllie Station, there is potential for a new public storefront — one that completes a vital east-west connection, and introduces a democratic public space at the heart of Hyllie.



Between Grounds: A Plan Proposal for the Long-Term Development of Hyllie

Hyllie in Transition: Mapping the Layers of Urban Transformation

This composite map of Hyllie overlays a 1960s aerial photograph with a modern cadastral map to illustrate the district's dramatic transformation from rural farmland to a dense urban environment within Malmö. The contrast between historical agricultural landscapes and today's structured grid of residential and commercial development highlights how urban planning has redefined the area over time.

Key historical elements, such as the former Trelleborg-Malmö railway line - now a pedestrian promenade - remain visible, offering continuity within change. Similarly, the Kulladal villa settlement reflects a layer of spatial and social continuity amid surrounding urban growth. These preserved features demonstrate how traces of the past continue to influence contemporary urban form.

Hyllie's evolution mirrors the broader post-industrial urbanization of Malmö, where former peripheral zones have become densified urban districts. The map serves as both a visual archive and a planning tool, emphasizing the importance of integrating historical memory into future urban design. It invites reflection on how infrastructure and landscape features can serve not only functional roles but also as symbolic links across time, anchoring identity and cultural meaning within an evolving cityscape.

Fragmented Ground: Infrastructure and Everyday Life

This topographic map of Hyllie reveals a landscape shaped by large-scale infrastructure, highlighting the impact of urban development on terrain and daily life. Rendered in grayscale relief, it emphasizes how highways, rail lines, and road junctions have sculpted the area — connecting Hyllie regionally while disconnecting it locally. These infrastructures dominate the terrain, carving through the neighborhood with embankments, ramps, overpasses, and traffic circles. While they integrate Hyllie into the wider transit network, they also create physical barriers that disrupt pedestrian movement, social interaction, and neighborhood cohesion.

The map illustrates a core paradox: infrastructure designed for regional mobility often undermines local connectivity. Residents navigating everyday routines - walking to school, accessing green spaces, or connecting with neighbors - face fragmented pathways and obstacles. This landscape reflects a spatial logic that prioritizes speed and distance over local experience. The image underscores how terrain is not passive but actively shaped by infrastructure, influencing how people move, interact, and live. Creating social attractors within these disconnected neighborhoods can help facilitate interaction, while improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the infrastructure is key to everyday life and to linking the fragmented grounds of Hyllie.



Hyllie map with 1960s aerial photo overlay and modern cadastre map.
Source: Lantmäteriet



Topographic map of Hyllie.
Source: Lantmäteriet

Soft Mobility: Bridging Infrastructural and Cultural Divides

A central challenge in Hyllie is the persistence of infrastructural and social boundaries - physical barriers like highways, rail lines, and underpasses that mirror deeper social separations. To bridge these divides, infrastructure must be rethought as a connective, socially programmed built-and-unbuilt environment. Prioritizing pedestrian and cyclist mobility over car-dominated development is key. Intuitive wayfinding systems, safe pedestrian bridges, continuous cycling networks, and human-scaled street design can foster seamless movement between the neighborhoods of Hyllie, Holma, Lindeborg, and Kulladal.

The planning proposal strategically allocates areas within the new commercial and mixed-use development to support public infrastructure throughout Hyllie. For example, a new urban market, along with a viewing platform and art center, will be located between the grounds of Hyllie, overdecking the existing railway infrastructure. This hub is designed to attract visitors both locally and from the wider region. In a similar, though more locally focused way, the overdecking above the highway north of Malmömassan serves not only as a cycling connection but as a destination in its own right, offering opportunities to experience innovative, productive urban agriculture testbeds up close.

By designing public spaces and mobility systems that foster spontaneous encounters, slower rhythms, and shared daily routines, urban infrastructure transforms into a platform for social integration. Bridging physical barriers also helps bridge symbolic divides — weaving together communities that have long lived side by side.

Healing the Fragments: Cultivating an Urban Neighbourhood

To regenerate Hyllie's ecological and social fabric, it is essential to heal the fragmented urban ecosystems left behind by infrastructure-led development. A critical strategy lies in reclaiming the overlooked spaces between formal zones - and transforming them into productive and participatory landscapes. These residual spaces, often dismissed as infrastructural leftovers, can be activated through a reinvention of agriculture in contemporary urban form. Hyllie's farmland past provides a meaningful foundation to build upon - one that resonates across cultures and offers a common reference point for a diverse population.

Community gardens, or allotment gardens, along with rooftop farms, and community-run greenhouses, can be integrated into parks, courtyards, and streetscapes. These productive interventions are not only ecologically valuable - they enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, and regulate microclimates - but also offer strong social functions. They provide shared spaces for cultivation, cooperation, and mutual learning.

Through such transformation, Hyllie can model a regenerative urbanism where nature is not segregated from city life but embedded

within it — demonstrating new ways of identifying long-term value through ecological stewardship, resource circularity, and the restoration of self-sustaining urban ecosystems.

Transforming Plurality into Shared Spatial Narratives

Hyllie's social fabric and programmatic composition are richly diverse, and the district's future depends on transforming this plurality into shared spatial narratives. In this context, mixed-use development becomes essential — integrating housing, workplaces, services, and cultural programs to support continuous, layered use by a wide range of people. Social housing should be incorporated — not isolated — within these developments, offering affordable, dignified living conditions that avoid spatial segregation of lower-income residents. Planning policies should actively support shared ownership models, including state-subsidized, collective, and cooperative housing schemes.

Ground floors are envisioned as inclusive and multifunctional, where daycare units and shared facilities — such as workshops and community-run spaces — exist on equal footing with commercial amenities like cafés, services, and small businesses. This balanced mix of social and commercial functions fosters a vibrant and responsive environment, catering to the varied interests and needs of the community.

Smart and sustainable systems — such as district energy networks, adaptive lighting, and circular waste infrastructures — are implemented not only for operational efficiency but also as civic assets accessible to all. Likewise, architecture and public space design should reflect cultural multiplicity without essentializing it, using art, signage, and spatial storytelling to acknowledge diverse origins while building a shared sense of belonging. Through such design and policy frameworks, Hyllie can cultivate a dynamic urbanism — one that not only accommodates diversity but draws strength and identity from it: layered, evolving, and collectively owned.



Courtyard View with Alley Following the Old Railway Trace

Phasing

The proposal unfolds in three phases—starting with housing and soft mobility at the neighbourhood scale, followed by overdecking infrastructure that connects Hyllie to Malmö's green park system, and culminating in a regional signal for sustainable development, with an urban market bridging both sides of the railway tracks. Involving local residents from the beginning is key to anchoring Hyllie in both its local and regional social ecosystems, placing public space at the forefront of transformation.

Phase 1. Neighbourhood Scale Reconnecting and Re-sourcing Communities

The first phase focuses on local integration, aiming to reconnect Hyllie with its neighbouring districts, Holma and Lindeborg. This is achieved by anchoring key social destinations along important urban corridors—such as Kulladal Park, the bridge over Annetorpsvägen, and Hyllie Vattenparksgata—thereby enhancing walkability and strengthening both social and physical cohesion.

A new mixed-use residential neighbourhood is introduced with a strong emphasis on long-term sustainable resilience. To accommodate growing connectivity needs, the existing bridge on Hyllie Vattenparksgata is reimagined as a lookout deck—transforming it from its current compromised condition into an inviting, safe, and enjoyable passage across the railway.

A central design axis is the former Järnvägen road, reinterpreted as a pedestrian promenade that serves as the neighbourhood's social and ecological spine. This green corridor supports inclusive densification, introducing a mix of housing typologies and activating the ground floor with local services, mixed-use programming, and everyday interactions.

The plan includes porous southern blocks with plazas connected to a diagonal route, where references to historical agriculture are translated into a contemporary living environment. In the northern part of the site, a rational grid creates a flexible framework for dense and green development, adaptable to future housing models. At the northern end of the Järnvägen alley, along Annetorpsvägen, an active park emerges—featuring sports and recreation nodes that connect the site to the new development in the west.

This phase prioritises circular material practices, incorporating local resources such as clay bricks, timber, and stone to reinforce a strong sense of place rooted in Malmö's material and cultural identity. It champions ecosystem regeneration, social inclusivity, and the active participation of residents in shaping their everyday environment.

Phase 2. City Scale

Reimagining Infrastructure for Innovation and Integration

The second phase elevates the development to a citywide scale by rethinking the role of infrastructure—not as a barrier, but as a connector. The proposal for the Hyllie Innovation Business Park envisions the overdecking of Annetorpsvägen, physically linking Malmömässan with Krokbacken. This intervention transforms the highway into an urban platform that merges functionality with accessibility.

The Innovation Park is conceived as a zero-net-energy, mixed-use development, composed of 50% state-owned institutions and 50% commercial enterprises, creating a balanced ecosystem for employment and innovation. Approximately 30% of the area is dedicated to green infrastructure, integrating ecological corridors, bioswales, and planted roofs—including the park overdecking above Annetorpsvägen, which connects the allotment gardens with the new Tuscan-themed park.

This phase contributes to social re-sourcing by establishing a work destination accessible to all Malmö residents—Malmöbor—and addressing structural barriers related to marginalisation and unemployment. It redefines success by prioritising long-term socio-ecological value over traditional real estate metrics, demonstrating how architecture and infrastructure can actively support social and environmental justice.

Phase 3. Regional Scale

Hyllie as a Storefront for the Sustainable Development

At the regional scale, Hyllie is envisioned as a symbolic and functional node connecting Malmö to Copenhagen and the greater Öresund. The centrepiece of this phase is the Wood Tower—a mixed-use high-rise accommodating offices, residences, hotels, cultural spaces, and retail. Its architectural form and materials reflect Malmö's sustainability ethos, showcasing regenerative practices and regional resources.

The base of the tower functions as a public platform and pedestrian bridge, linking both sides of Hyllie and extending the urban fabric across the site. Adjacent to this, an Urban Market Hall with a distinctive kaleidoscope-inspired roof structure spans the plaza bridge, creating a vibrant gastronomic gathering place. The market becomes a platform for Malmö's diverse communities to meet, celebrate, and share. Through this phase, Hyllie emerges as a regional example—or precedent—for ecological urbanism, cultural hybridity, and civic innovation, contributing to Malmö's position as a leader in sustainable and inclusive development.